

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 05374 221813Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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R 221725Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1506
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5374

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, US, IT
SUBJECT: USG ATTITUDE TOWARD NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT COALITION

1. THE AMBASSADOR AND OTHER MISSION OFFICERS ARE BEING AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE ASKED THEIR VIEW OF THE NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT AND, PARTICULARLY, OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PCI PARTICIPATION IN THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. WHILE WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF SEEKING OPPORTUNITIES TO COMMENT ON SUCH QUESTIONS, THERE ARE OCCASIONS ON WHICH THEY CANNOT BE AVOIDED. TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE FOR SUCH OCCASIONS TO MISSION OFFICERS, THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN PREPARED. THEY ARE FORWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR ITS COMMENT AND CONCURRENCE.

2. GUIDELINES FOR ON-THE-RECORD PUBLIC STATEMENTS:
--WE SHOULD DECLINE TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS REQUESTING AN EVALUATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AS INAPPROPRIATE BETWEEN ALLIES AND FRIENDS.
--IF WE ARE PRESSED ABOUT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 05374 221813Z

COMMUNIST PARTY, REFERENCE SHOULD BE MADE TO THE JANUARY 12 STATEMENT AND ITS CONTINUING VALIDITY.
-- WE SHOULD AVOID SAYING ANYTHING THAT WOULD INDICATE THAT WE ACCEPT OR ASSUME THAT THE PCI HAS A PERMANENT ROLE TO PLAY IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT.
-- WE SHOULD AVOID SAYING ANYTHING THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A DESIRE ON OUR PART TO "PUNISH"

ITALY FOR HAVING BROUGHT THE PCI INTO THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.

3. GUIDELINES FOR INFORMAL, OFF-THE-RECORD STATEMENTS: OUR VIEWS WILL BE SOUGHT ON AN INFORMAL, OFF-THE-RECORD BASIS BY AMERICAN NEWSMEN, REPRESENTATIVES OF FRIENDLY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS, ITALIAN NEWSMEN, POLITICIANS, AND OTHERS, AND US CONGRESSMEN. FOR THOSE WHOSE DISCRETION CAN BE TRUSTED OR TOWARD WHOM WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION OF CANDOR (E.G., US CONGRESSMEN), THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE SUGGESTED. OBVIOUSLY, THE CONTENT WILL HAVE TO BE TAILORED TO THE AUDIENCE.

A) WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY HAVE PREFERRED NOT TO HAVE THE COMMUNISTS IN THE MAJORITY AND WE REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE PCI'S GOALS AND VALUES. THE JANUARY 12 STATEMENT AND ITS CONTINUED VALIDITY CAN BE CITED (STATE 61361, 3/10/78).

B) WE RECOGNIZE THAT ELECTIONS AT THIS TIME (APPARENTLY THE ONLY OTHER VIABLE ALTERNATIVE) WOULD HAVE PRESENTED A SERIOUS RISK, AND WE RESPECT THE DC'S CHOICE AS TO WHICH WAS THE LESSER OF THESE TWO EVILS.

C) INCLUSION OF THE PCI IN THE MAJORITY DOES
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ROME 05374 221813Z

REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL ADVANCE FOR THAT PARTY, BUT NOT NECESSARILY A PERMANENT ONE.

D) THE LONG-TERM IMPORTANCE OF THAT ADVANCE WILL DEPEND IN LARGE PART ON HOW THE PCI AND THE NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES CONDUCT THEMSELVES DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. THERE IS ROOM FOR BOTH THE PCI AND THE NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES (ESPECIALLY THE DC) TO IMPROVE THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS WITH THE ITALIAN ELECTORATE; IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THE NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES WILL PURSUE POLICIES AND ACTIONS THAT WILL CONVINCE THE ITALIAN ELECTORATE THAT THEY OFFER THE MOST DESIRABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR THE FUTURE.

E) FOR THE SHORT-TERM, THERE APPEARS TO BE LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF SHARP CHANGE IN ITALY'S FOREIGN POLICY. THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE MAIN PILLARS OF THAT POLICY.

F) IT IS TOO EARLY TO SEE WHAT IMPACT, IF ANY,

MORO'S KIDNAPPING WILL HAVE ON ITALY'S POLITICAL FUTURE.
GARDNER

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